

EXHIBIT

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Report Of Visit To Al-Haramain Foundation USA Office
25 Rabi' Al-Awwal - 27 Rabi' Al-Aakhir July 9, 1999 - August 10, 1999
Submitted by
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The following report is a summary of the activities in which I participated during my stay in Ashland, Oregon on behalf of Al-Haramain Foundation.

Purpose of Visit

The main purpose and goal of my visit was to conduct a series of Islamic educational classes for the benefit of the Muslims in Ashland over an extended period and to deliver the Friday sermon and to assist or advise the brothers there in any other way possible. This was largely accomplished and I was well received by the brothers there, Abu Yunus Seda-Ghaty, David Hafer, Rob Brown and Daveed Gartenstein-Ross. These brothers extended the warmest greetings to me there upon arrival and proceeded to make sure that I was provided with everything needed for a comfortable and productive stay and this was extended to my family when they joined me for a brief period. Their enthusiasm, generosity and kindness will have a lasting effect upon me and I feel as though I have not only met some brothers or workers but made friends, in shaa Allah. Theirs was a true demonstration of Islamic brotherhood.

Summary of Activities

I began planning activities with the brothers upon my arrival. A schedule was made for the community of the lectures and classes to be held which was distributed on Yaum Al-Jumu'ah. I gave the khutbah on the topic of living according to Islam which was the theme of the talks to be given that weekend. Classes were scheduled to be held throughout the week. These classes were finally broken into two periods with an earlier Asr session given to accommodate sisters who may have needed to return to their homes before it became too late in the evening and a second session after Maghrib that were given to accommodate anyone else. Daytime activities were decided against for the majority of the community due to their daily work schedules. This was the basic format for the following weeks with the early classes concentrating on Understanding the Qur'aan and the later ones on Islamic Belief and Practice.

Usually two, and on occasion, three lectures were held on the topic of a particular theme each weekend. A total of between 20 and 30 lectures and classes was given over the entire period and most of them were recorded on audio cassette. It is my hope that these lectures or at least some of them can be used by Al-Haramain Foundation for the benefit of other Muslims and non-Muslims in the future. Two tapes were made in particular that addressed non-Muslims by giving them an introduction to Islam. They will however require editing.

The lectures and Friday khutbahs were extremely well-received by those who attended them. Attendance of classes outside of the Friday Prayers was somewhat sparse despite being announced and emails sent to other areas. The reasons for this may be several:

- One: The distant location of the Ashland Center
- Two: Lack of consistent follow-up in announcing the classes. They were not, for example, announced on the Al-Haramain web site itself.
- Three: The small number of local Muslims
- Four: Lack of recognition of the speaker
- Five: Lack of zeal of the community at large to gain knowledge
- Six: Inability to attend due to work schedules. And Allah knows best.

Additional Activities

Islamic Camp - One weekend an Islamic outing was held in the form of a camping trip to Sprague River, located several hours away from Ashland, where several acres of land is owned by the Muslims. The area is scenic and very conducive to reflection and relaxation. I gave a very brief talk was given there on the first evening due to the lack of daylight and several families had to return to Ashland. Horses and camping supplies were provided by the brothers and I gave another brief talk the next day about Muslim character and we had several personal discussions about Islamic issues.

Several inquiries of a fiqh nature were made to the center which Ahmed Ezzat, visiting from Riyadh, and myself were able to help deal with. The brothers had the numbers of those in the US they could consult on such issues when they arise. I even personally helped arrange the library which had fallen into some disuse and disarray, including their many tape and video cassettes. Everything still needed to be cataloged.

Da'wah

The Arabian tent project was active during my stay. Non-Muslims were invited to the tent every Saturday from 6 to 8 p.m. and they would reserve or at times just show up. One lady visited on several occasions with her small daughter. A presentation was given by Abu Yunus Seda-Ghaty with myself and Ahmed Ezzat, participating. Another session was held in which I was the main presenter and Abu Yunus, Ahmed, Daveed, Abdullah Al-Najashi (also in from Riyadh) all

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participated. These sessions were on average attended by 4 to 5 people from the Ashland area and were generally well-received. The people showed great interest and asked intelligent questions and were given literature to read as well as an open invitation to return whenever they wished.

The brothers produced a very attractive newspaper advertisement for the da'wah tent that ran in the local papers and will continue to run in the future, in shaa Allah.

Several other efforts for da'wah were made to individuals at the center and at the home of Abu Yunus which we pray will have a good effect on those non-Muslims who were addressed, ameen.

The distribution of books and the filling of requests requires the bulk of the time of the brothers. This fell far behind due to the distraction of the video project and the arrival of visitors. The brothers however took it all in stride despite that the demands often suddenly placed upon them are more than they could possibly fulfill at once. The brothers cared for their guests who often came unannounced and did all they could to accommodate them.

David Hafer should actually be especially commended in this regard. This brother took care of not only office duties, but the care of the grounds and feeding and care of the animals as well as the guests all the while he was physically injured. He was only slowed down when he suffered the fracture of his heel in a riding accident.

Dayeed was constantly given tasks and demands and usually dealt with them gracefully even when they were bound to be frustrating and over burdensome. His job was not easy. His loss after departing for Law School will be deeply felt.

The letters from prison were incredibly high and needed to be responded to quickly due to the nature of the transience of prisoners. They are an important group that should be given priority in dealing with their requests and not the other way around. Many mailings had been returned however, sometimes when the prison officials refused to receive or deliver them to prisoners, and upon Allah do we depend.

School Visits

A special trip was taken to a summer school for children with developmental problems and Mandoub, the resident camel and ambassador of Al-Haramain was taken as a special attraction. A Muslim sister who works there arranged for the visit. It was a very rewarding experience although not much was stated directly regarding Islam to the children. They were absolutely overjoyed with the visit and the information they got from David Hafer who has become known as "The Camel Guy" in Ashland. The children subsequently sent pictures they had colored along with warm letters of appreciation to the Foundation for their visit.

Mandoub often gets the attention of passersby on the road who stop to look at him in disbelief. If such people are spotted taking an interest in him, the brothers use that opportunity to invite them to the da'wah tent. He is definitely an effective da'wah tool.

On the same day another trip was made to a school where brother Abdi, a member of the Islamic community, works. Mandoub was again the main attraction for the children who ranged from ages 5 to 16 and their instructors. I gave a very brief presentation mentioning a few words about Islam and inviting the community to visit the center. David Hafer again gave an informative presentation about Mandoub and the children as well as adults were fascinated. At this session, literature was taken by several children and adults and a local news reporter came to the event. Many older children and adults were engaged in conversation about Islam, wal hamdulillah.

Jackson County Fair

A visit by three of us to the Jackson County Fair was taken in order to distribute da'wah material to attendees if possible. We were unable to attend until the last day of the fair and such events are usually attended by large crowds. We were unable to put out very much literature except at a single booth being run by a Muslim brother and his wife. There were some restrictions to handing out religious literature or just leaving it any place. We were however stopped by two Christian zealots who engaged us for over 40 minutes. They of course were trying to prevent us from handing anything out to the public as well as to do what they thought was "God's work" on us.

As is most often the case with such people, their knowledge of Islam was superficial and/or totally wrong so our meeting was quite an education for them. Unfortunately, they were out to "catch some fish" and not to learn the truth. They were however, invited to the center and given some literature, including a translation of the Qur'aan, wal hamdulillah.

Da'wah Video Project

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One of the most significant activities which I participated in was that of an Islamic Da'wah film to be produced by the brothers their in Ashland on behalf of Al-Haramain Foundation. Two brothers, Ahmed Ezzat and Abdullah Al-Najashi, arrived approximately two weeks after me specifically to work on this project.

The objective and focus of the film after much discussion was to present Islam from the Muslim perspective with a special focus on belief in Allah and tawheed.

Brother Abu Yunus initiated the idea for this project some time ago and it was finally coming to reality. He had done extensive research into what needed to be done and was eager to cooperate and exchange ideas. He gave each of us an outline of what the project concept was and what it would involve. Several planning sessions were held among myself, Abu Yunus, Ahmed, Abdullah and at times David and Daveed. We were all present with telephone conversations to Riyadh with Sulieman Al-Buthe about the length and budgeting of the project.

In preparation for the project, Abu Yunus and Daveed arranged meetings with several video and film making professionals. We visited several studios to assess their facilities and capabilities after much work was done to arrange that by brother Daveed in particular. We were given a training session at one studio that showed us the capabilities of digital film processing and computer based editing. We were shown around a very large and extensive sound stage and film production area of Land Mind Studios and after speaking with them and seeing what they produced it was decided that they were indeed the best equipped of all the studios that had been contacted.

Abu Yunus arranged a meeting with a local film producer who advised the center on what it needed to look at and be aware of. His consultation was done without charge due to the good relationship of Abu Yunus and his efforts to interest him, and may Allah reward Abu Yunus and guide the producer who was not Muslim. His comments were invaluable and he later participated as an extra cameraman on his own time and showed quite a bit of interest in Islam.

Abu Yunus again arranged meetings with a professional screen writer that were of immense value to me in particular since I was recruited to write the actual script for the film. She also offered her consultation freely due to her good relationship with Abu Yunus and made valuable comments. Both myself and Abdullah Al-Najashi, who was given direction responsibilities, collaborated to put together the dialogue and film scenarios to be used in the film.

Difficulties

One of the main difficulties was lack of time and the next was lack of a clear budget for some time. The cost of making a film is immense, especially one which utilizes stock footage (details can be provided if necessary). Another major difficulty is the seeming lack of complete understanding of the nature of the project and its aims and requirements. This was obvious in the decision to send a non-English speaking Saudi with limited experience in film making and no experience with an American audience or the standards of the industry. It was also obvious in the lack of clear direction for Ahmed Ezzat, who although he has extensive experience in producing Islamic audios, it is mostly in Arabic in a Middle Eastern context and not in the visual medium. He has indeed worked in television and radio in English but not in an American context.

The requirements of American television were also not realized until research had been done, again at a very late stage. The type of film, the script, cameras, equipment and time and money required to do such a project was not all known until late after the arrival of the two brothers sent by Al-Haramain. I was not even expecting to participate at all yet I ended up writing the script which is perhaps the most important aspect of making the film because a film's content is its core.

Both Ahmed and Abdullah should be highly commended however for their willingness to contribute, learn and work in such a situation. Despite these shortcomings they made significant contributions and still have more to come for what is actually the most crucial part of the video making process, editing.

Abdullah Al-Najashi especially, underwent hardship in the loss of his personal belongings during his flight by United Airlines. Yet he was gracious and bore it with patience and may Allah reward him. He was also unable to bring in audio equipment from Saudi Arabia because of various restrictions. This was something that should have been researched and known before he set out. Secondly, the camera he did bring with him, although it was certainly of very high quality, was not suitable for the task at hand. This was another matter that should have been researched and known before he set out.

It took quite some time and discussion to really make clear, not only the mission of the video, but the methodology of film making that has to be taken into consideration when addressing an American/Western audience. This is something that was not present or completely clear in the concept of Abdullah nor it seems Al-Haramain. Dealing with the audience as well as the professionals needed to make such a film is an entirely different process in the US than it is in Saudi Arabia. We pray that this gap in understanding was however overcome, no doubt due to the sincerity of the believers involved and their good intentions and of course the blessing and tawfeeq from Allah. We believe it was a major education for us all.

Ahmed Ezzat greatly helped in bridging the communication gap between Abdullah and the other brothers as well as the film crews with whom we later worked. Only due to the mercy of Allah were we able to work well in the end with a crew of people who showed a high level of professionalism even when we did not, which could have instead led to disastrous consequences.

After several rewrites of the script and much discussion of the direction of the film were we able to commence shooting. Not enough consideration was taken of the input of Abu Yunus since he was indeed the initiator of the project. He basically had to put his original idea on hold due to restrictions of time and money. He was given unrealistic instructions and guidelines, yet he still overcame a lot of frustration and hardship that was intensified by personal difficulties he was facing simultaneously in his living situation. I cannot stress enough how nothing could have been done without his efforts and this should be more greatly recognized by Al-Haramain headquarters. The same is actually true in general with regards to the center, after personally eye witnessing the effort Abu Yunus makes, on behalf of da'wah on a volunteer basis! It is an indication of his sincerity as well as that of the other brothers there, that many hours of film were nevertheless produced in two separate locations in a two day period.

The Making of the Video

Land Mind Studios was hired to do the filming of the video. They were indeed prompt and professional in all areas and respectful of the wishes and directions coming from several members of Al-Haramain.

After assessing the area where filming was to take place, they brought extensive equipment to the Al-Haramain premises and set up for shooting on the weekend at short notice. The members of the Muslim community were invited to participate on film and they did indeed turn out to the happiness of the brothers at the center. They showed patience with the intrusion of the film crew and were of immense help. All were again treated to a lunch by the center and went away happy. One brother named Abdullah who is legally blind, contributed by giving a moving interview on camera as did David Hafer, David Gartenstein-Ross, and Yusuf Seda-Ghaty. Filming was done in and around the Al-Haramain premises including the Bedouin tent for nearly eleven hours.

Ahmed Ezzat was very effective in assisting with communications between the crew and Abdullah Al-Najashi in addition to helping with conducting on-camera interviews and preparing those appearing on camera. I assisted in this process as well as appeared on camera.

A second day of filming was done in Ashland at Lithia Park. The weather was spectacular after there having just passed several days of rain. A lot of footage was taken of the scenery to be incorporated into the film. Interviews were held on camera and several scenarios were also filmed in the natural setting. Daveed, David, myself, Yunus Seda-Ghaty and several sisters participated in the filming. Indeed, the participation of the women was an outstanding and crucial contribution to this film aimed at an American audience. They were articulate in stating the case for Islam and giving people a view of what Islam means to the Muslims and to Muslim women in particular in a way that no speech by men could accomplish. Two sisters just happened to be visiting and made a major contribution in this regard. We pray this part of the film did record well and will be incorporated into the final product.

Filming this day was also nearly 11 hours with a total of over 6 hours of footage made, for what will be approximately a half-hour video in the end, in shaa Allah wa lillahilhamd.

The Next Step

Actually, filming with all its starts and stops, takes and retakes, setup and physical effort, is the easiest part of this entire process. Editing is absolutely crucial as is the scripting of each scene. It cannot be emphasized enough that myself, Ahmed Ezzat and select individuals who are of an American background be active and close participants in this process. There is no way that Abdullah Al-Najashi can accomplish the task of effective editing and production without assistance. Indeed, professional input is probably required of someone with experience in the American context. The whole idea of this project was to present Islam to a western audience, indeed and American one. This must be clear in the minds of Al-Haramain. A presentation that is effective in the American context will be effective to nearly every other English speaking audience, in shaa Allah.

It would have been ideal that all aspects of production be done there in the US in truth. Allah has however so far been very gracious to us in this endeavor and we have faith and hope that He will continue to bless this project as long as we cooperate with one another and remain flexible and open to suggestions.

Final Observations

The efforts of the brothers in Ashland are nothing but commendable. They demonstrated a high degree of organization and dedication to their task. They have been given a monumental amount of work to do with little manpower, yet they have managed to keep up with it for the most part. Recent events have forced them to fall behind. The loss of two staff members and the injury of a third. Al-Haramain took on a great responsibility when deciding to open an office in the

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U.S. They must therefore fully fulfill that responsibility by giving the brothers shouldering the upkeep and maintenance of the facility and its activities their fullest support. America is not like any other place and therefore poses several challenges and expenses not found elsewhere. As praiseworthy as the mission of Al-Haramain in America is, it will be squandered and considered a loss if they do not take the necessary steps to support what they have begun.

Abu Yunus Seda-Ghaty has largely shouldered the responsibility of making sure that the grounds and facility owned by Al-Haramain is well taken care of. He is volunteering his time and sacrificing his business and expending his own money to do whatever is necessary to fulfill the trust he has been given and wants no thanks for it, but no one deserves it more. He shows very good judgment and care for the place and his advice and recommendations should be given great weight, after examination of course. However, he should not have to justify why a filthy carpet should be replaced or a rotted kitchen fixed, a well-equipped and set-up office, or irrigated land and so forth. This is the minimum that should be done for a place dedicated to the service of Allah.

The office receives so many requests and the brothers have done their best to fulfill them. However, they will not be able to catch up and keep up without sufficient help. They are now suffering because of the small community there and thus a small local pool from which to get solid assistance. Therefore employment of qualified individuals is a must and should be properly pursued. I.e. announced on the Al-Haramain web site and qualifications, prerequisites, as well as salary and living information must all be provided and comparable to the local standard of such employment. Two men should not have to share the salary of one, and at least 3 full-timers are needed.

The community must be built and steps must be taken to do so. The same facility and money poured into this small out-of-the-way community could go a long way in the inner cities where the majority of Muslims live and the most da'wah is done. The same classes and lectures that were attended by 3 to 5 people would have drawn a packed house of many times greater number in other places. A da'wah tent as attractive and well kept and a slide presentation such as the one put together by Abu Yunus would no doubt attract numbers of visitors many times greater than those who come there to Ashland if located in the major cities. This reality makes it that much more important that the effort of the Foundation in Ashland succeed because the first question anyone asks when told about Ashland is: "Why there?" It is a legitimate question that can best be answered by concrete action and results.

I am confident that if many Muslims knew what the Ashland community had to offer they would indeed be willing to go there. It is environmentally beautiful and full of potential but it must be developed properly. I cannot tell you how many times the brothers asked me to stay. Why? Because they need knowledge, assistance, leadership and cohesiveness and there are so many areas that need work that they cannot accomplish as is. It is my hope that Al-Haramain takes into consideration what I have written and looks upon it constructively and I thank Allah for having been a part of such an effort and hope to continue to do what I can in the future. May Allah reward all those who had a hand in establishing this office and work to make it a success, ameen.

Abdul-Qadir Abdul-Khaaliq
24 Jumada Al-Awwal 1420 (September 4, 1999)